COMP 300: SOCIETY IN THE INFORMATION AGE, Spring 2010

This course will explore the ways in which technology has affected our lives in the realms of politics, religion, commerce, and personal relationships. We will also discuss our changing perceptions of property, privacy, authority, journalism, knowledge and identity. Examples of topics are citizen journalism, open sourced communities, Creative Commons, the 2008 presidential election, the new music business and the mobile lifestyle. Supplementary readings will provide discussion points for the class dialogue. Three, equally weighted, in-class, closed book quizzes will be scheduled during the semester covering the ideas and issues from the class discussions. Course grading will be determined by the quiz grades and class participation.

Instructor

Matthew Wettergreen

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Class Times

COMP 300 meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00pm to 2:20pm in Duncan Hall 1064.

Course Materials

Course materials for this course are accessible via OwlSpace located at: http://owlspace.rice.edu. The course materials will include links or files for supplementary reading material as well as notes from each class.

Grading

Course grades will be determined by grades on quizzes and class participation.

There will be three, equally weighted, in-class, closed book quizzes. Each will cover ideas and issues from the readings and from the class discussions. Each quiz will include a section of multiple-choice questions concerning the assigned readings and explorations -- what opinions, arguments, and challenges were presented. Each quiz will also include one or more short essays on class topics. At the end of the semester, I will calculate a final grade from the quizzes. I may then adjust that grade for some students based on their class participation.

Because so much of this course involves discussion, class participation is very important. I may, therefore, raise the grade of students who contribute extensively to the class or lower the grade of students who miss many classes. These grades for those who attend class, but do not participate actively, will be determined by their quizzes.

Disability

Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All such discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities will need to also contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center. Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will also need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.

If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with the Disability Support Services Office in the Allen Center.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	1/12/10	Class Organization	
	1/14/10	The Coming of the Book	Five Things about Technological Change (pdf) Oral Culture to Early Print Culture (pdf) The Impact of Print (pdf)
2	1/19/10	The Information Age	Millenial McLuhan (pdf) The Internet: A Short History Digital Generations (NPR) The Internet in 2005 (.pdf)
	1/21/10	The Future of Computing	Moore's Law (pdf) As We May Think (pdf) The Computers of Tomorrow (pdf) Live Forever (pdf) Open Source computing (http://www.linuxjournal.com/article/4709)
3	1/26/10	Property	R. Gomulkiewicz, "How Copyleft Uses License Rights to Succeed in the Open Source Software Revolution and the Implications for Article 2B," 36 Hous. L. Rev. 179 (2002) (pdf) Online Lecture by Lessig Reclaiming the Commons (http://www.bollier.org/pdf/PA_Report.pdf) Read about Creative Commons Licenses (http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses)
	1/28/10	Plagiarism	Plagiarism: A Lie of the Mind (pdf) Internet Plagiarism (pdf) Plagiarism Detection (pdf)
4	2/2/10	Privacy	Information Age Privacy Concerns (pdf) The Net Never Forgets (pdf) The Internet of Things (pdf) Where Have all the Computers Gone? (pdf)
	2/4/10	Authenticity	lonelygirl15: The Pleasures and Perils of Participation (http://flowtv.org/?p=14) Cluetrain Manifesto, Chapter 1 (http://www.cluetrain.com/apocalypso.html)
5	2/9/10	FIRST TEST	
	2/11/10	Social Networks - Identity	Think Before You Share (pdf) Unraveling the Mysteries of the Connected Age (pdf) Here Comes Everybody excerpt (pdf)

6	2/16/10	Social Networks - Communities	Smart Mobs (Wikipedia) Weapons of Mass Mobilizations (pdf) Discussion of Social Software (audio, NPR) Small Worlds (Wikipedia) The History of Wikipedia (pdf)
	2/18/10	The Music Business	Online Lecture by Lessig PIP File Sharing (pdf) The Year The Music Dies (pdf) The Music Industry's Digital Problem (http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/mar2009/tc2009035_000194.htm)
7	2/23/10	Politics	How the Internet Invented Howard Dean (pdf) The Internet in the 2004 Campaign (pdf) Read about the The Long Tail (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_Tail) The Social Pulpit (http://issuu.com/gracerodriguez/docs/barack_obamas_social_media_toolkit_1.09) How to Win in 2010 (http://www.epolitics.com/2009/09/21/how-candidates-can-use-the-internet-to-win-in-2010-part-one/)
	2/25/10		NO CLASS
8	3/2/10	SPRING BREAK	
	3/4/10	SPRING BREAK	
9	3/9/10	Religion	Faith Online (pdf) Holy Ghost in the Machine (pdf)
	3/11/10	Ways of Knowing	S. Maurer and S. Scotchmer, "Procuring Knowledge," Advances in the Study of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Economic Growth 15:1 (2004) (pdf) Characteristics of the n-Gen (web) Growing Up Digital (pdf) Discussion of Computers in Schools (audio) I Saw it on the Internet (pdf) Discussion of "digital gap" for minority children (audio)
10	3/16/10	SECOND TEST	
	3/18/10	NO CLASS	
11	3/23/10	Ways of Learning	The Google Library Project (pdf)

			Einstein's Dreams (pdf) How Computers Are Changing The Way We Think (pdf) Information Literacy Makes All The Wrong Assumptions (pdf) Life Interrupted (pdf) As Simple as Possible, but not Simpler (pdf)
	3/25/10	Dumbing Down	A Very Long Disengagement (pdf) Growing Up Digital (pdf) Everything Bad is Good for You (pdf) Cult of the Amateur excerpt (pdf) The Culture Wars excerpt (pdf)
12	3/30/10	Life on the Screen	A Rape in Cyberspace (pdf) The Lost Boys (pdf) Study of Media Habits (pdf) Violence in Video Games (pdf)
	4/1/10	SPRING RECESS	
13	4/6/10	Technology and Happiness	Technology and Happiness (pdf) How Not to Buy Happiness (pdf)
	4/8/10	The World is Flat	The Flat World (pdf) High Tech/High Touch (pdf) Free Agents in the Olde World (pdf) Selling to the Poor (pdf)
14	4/13/10	Technology and Manufacturing	Read about Fab@Home (http://fabathome.org/wiki/index.php?title=Main_Page) Rapid Prototyping Review (pdf)
	4/15/10	Artificial Intelligence / Cyborgs	First chapter of book on A.I. Artificial Intelligensia (pdf) The Movie in Your Head (pdf) Electric Kids (pdf) Kurzweil's discussion of the Singularity (audio, NPR) The Machine Stops (pdf) Cyborg (Wikipedia) Cyborg (pdf)
15	4/20/10	Resistance	Grounding Technology (pdf) The Future Doesn't Need Us (pdf)
	4/22/10	Relinquishment	
16	4/27/10	FINAL EXAM - THIRD TEST	
	4/29/10	FINAL EXAM	